C3475-1A
11/18/86
BUSINESS
EDITION ONLY

SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

$3.50
PER COPY

PART ONE
OF TWO PARTS

VOLUME 41 NUMBER 11
NOVEMBER 1986

EQUIPMENT TODAY: SETTING THE STAGE FOR STAR-QUALITY FOOD

EQUIPMENT DIRECTORY

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SUPERMARKET BUSINESS Magazine (ISSN 0196-5700) is published monthly by Fieldmark Media, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Telephone: 212-354-5169. Circulated free of charge to grocery retailers and wholesalers. U.S. subscriptions $35 per year; Canada, $40 per year. Foreign subscriptions $48 (seamail), $198 (airmail), per year. Single copies $3.50 except Consumer Expenditures Study (September issue) $20 per copy. (Discount prices available on multiple purchases.)
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Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices.

VBPA ABP Association Of Business Publishers, Inc.

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Store planners and supermarket operators are becoming more aware of just how to position their stores. Today, store planners have a greater variety in putting stores together, as retailers have become more willing to analyze their operations, and equipment manufacturers more flexible

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KEVIN COUPE

Alfalfa opened in the competitive Denver market that blends a supermarket-style diversity with the upscale, healthy appeal of a natural foods store.

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Many supermarkets, seeking new ways to make themselves different from the competition, are developing nonfoods "boutiques".

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NonFoods BUSINESS

NONFOODS FOCUSES ON DESIGNS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE/KEVIN COUPE 5B

Supermarket designers and retailers say that the trend toward developing nonfoods "boutiques" is continuing, with video, cosmetics and appliance sections particularly innovative and effective. The strategy can work in a variety of formats and locations, from a gigantic superstore in Louisiana to a conventional unit on Long Island, as long as retailers maintain perspective about who they are and what they are trying to achieve.

SAMI UPDATE/ALAN MILLER JR. 14B

Sales of health and beauty aids in food stores posted a modest gain in September, ending the series of losses recorded for the previous four months. Cough and cold remedies, hair spray, and lip care products were among the categories that contributed to the overall gain.

ALSO IN NONFOODS BUSINESS:

NEW PRODUCTS..... 20B, 22B

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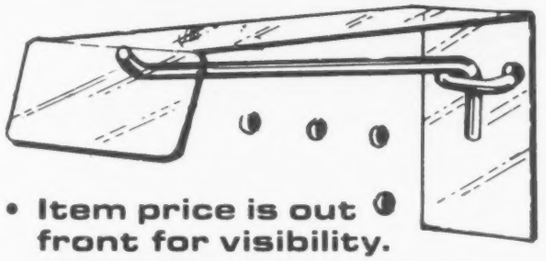

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SAMI UPDATE

BY ALAN MILLER, JR

HBA Unit Sales for September Almost Match Year-Ago Sales

The total volume for health and beauty aids showed a modest gain for the early September period, after four consecutive months of losses. Gains for cough and cold remedies signal early season strength.

During the 28-day reporting period ending Sept. 12, 1986, unit retail volume among the 50 health and beauty aids (HBA) categories combined rose $83,000, or less than one tenth of a percentage point, compared to the corresponding period a year ago. This increase, albeit minimal, ended the series of overall losses recorded for the previous four consecutive periods. The sales gain was on top of a 2.9 percent increase during the similar period in 1985, over the level attained in 1984.

Current dollar volume in these same categories rose 3.8 percent, representing better performance than the loss of 0.2 percent found among dry grocery:nonfood items and a gain rate of 1.5 percent for frozen foods. In the other two SAMI measured departments, dry grocery:food and refrigerated foods, dollar volume increases amounted to 4.0 percent and 5.9 percent respectively.

The four-week HBA unit volume gains and losses were identical on both product group and product category levels. Four product groups were in plus territory, and the most important upward change from a volume standpoint was the 4.2 percent increase for proprietary remedies. The most significant loss rates were detected among baby needs (− 5.3 percent) and oral hygiene (− 4.5 percent).

Categories split

An almost even split between gains and losses also occurred at the category level trending, with 24 gains and 26 losses recorded. Four high-volume categories exhibited double-digit growth rates: hair spray (+ 16.1 percent), cold tablets (+ 29.4 percent), synthetic vitamins (+ 11.8 percent) and lip care products (+ 17.4 percent).

The most damaging downward performance among high-volume product categories occurred in baby powders (− 10.7 percent), spray deodorants (− 10.5 percent), hair coloring (− 10.2 percent), after-shave lotions (− 13.4 percent) and facial preparations (− 11.6 percent).

All four of the baby needs categories tracked by SAMI are continuing on a downward course. This product group hasn't shown a gain since last April, when the four-week unit volume for nursing supplies moved into plus territory. This category is still showing a gain for the full year but only by the slim margin of + 1.1 percent.

Only three of the eight personal deodorant categories had higher volume for the current reporting period than for the same period a year ago. Roll-ons inched up 0.2 percent, stick deodorants moved ahead only 1.4 percent, while foot deodorants and athlete's foot remedies showed a gain of 2.0 percent, which was half the gain for the annual reporting period.

Double-digit loss rates were recorded for spray deodorants (− 10.5 percent, mostly attributable to body spray volume weakness), cream deodorants (− 14.8 percent or about par for this category's course) and deodorant and talcum powder (− 11.3 percent, compared to a particularly strong showing a year ago).

Unit volume of first aid antiseptics was 6.3 percent ahead of that for the previous year, but this gain rate was lower than had been seen over a 12-week period.

Hair care losses

All seven hair care needs categories combined recorded a loss of just 0.1 percent. Gains for hair sprays (+ 16.1 percent), hair setting needs (+ 5.2 percent) and home permanent kits (+ 3.3 percent) were not quite sufficient to erase the losses for shampoo (− 3.7 percent), hair conditioning rinses (− 4.4 percent), hair coloring (− 10.2 percent) and hair dressing needs (− 7.5 percent).

The September reporting period losses for shampoo, hair conditioning rinses and hair dressing needs were not as great as those registered in the preceding period, but the loss rate for hair colorings has accelerated throughout the summer. The four-week gain for hair sprays represents an increase of nearly 1.4 million units. The only two categories of hair care needs recording annual increases are hair sprays (+ 14.3 percent) and hair setting needs (+ 23.0 percent).

Although product category performance in the oral hygiene group generally leaves much to be desired, there are some promising trends. The loss for toothpaste and powder is versus a gain of 5.7 percent in the corresponding period in 1985 over the 1984 period. But the loss rates of 4.5 percent for denture cleaners and 6.6 percent for denture adhesives are improvements over the loss rates they recorded for the preceding period, which exceeded 9 percent.

The gain of 4.5 percent for toothbrushes represents an improvement over the 3.0 percent gain in the August period. The gain of 1.1 percent for mouthwash is only slightly less than the 2.0 percent gain in August and is, of course, an improvement over the annual loss of 0.1 percent for this category.

Vitality in remedies

A number of high-volume categories of proprietary remedies showed evidence of good growth and vitality. Among cold and cough remedies, three of the four categories measured by SAMI were able to register growth, compared to the September period a year ago. The 29.4 percent gain for cold tablets is outstanding, particularly when viewed against the 6.6 percent increase for September 1985 over September 1984. The only negative trend in the cough and cold arena was a − 4.0 percent in the small-volume, two-brand chest rub category.

Internal analgesics also perked up as the ibuprofen competition heated up. The gains for appetite suppressants (+ 6.8 percent) and synthetic vitamins (+ 11.8 percent) are both stronger than those recorded in the August reporting period. More than a year has passed since natural vitamins, minerals and supplements have been reported by SAMI, and

Continued on page 19B

SAMI UPDATE

HEALTH & BEAUTY AIDS: SAMI FOUR-WEEK FOOD STORE UNIT TRENDS VS. YEAR AGO

PRODUCT GROUP AND CATEGORY	% CHANGE VS. YEAR AGO 4 WEEKS ENDING 7/18/86	4 WEEKS ENDING 8/15/86	4 WEEKS ENDING 9/12/86
BABY NEEDS	**– 3.6%**	**– 6.7%**	**– 5.3%**
Baby Powders	+ 2.6	– 5.5	– 10.7
Baby Oils, Creams & Lotions	– 4.9	– 11.8	– 4.1
Infant Clothes	– 13.7	– 13.6	– 10.2
Nursing Supplies	– 3.3	– 0.4	– 2.2
DEODORANTS	**– 1.9%**	**+ 0.5%**	**– 2.6%**
Sprays	– 6.6	– 4.5	– 10.5
Roll-Ons	– 3.9	+ 2.1	+ 0.2
Stick Deodorants & Pads	+ 3.5	+ 8.0	+ 1.4
Creams	– 8.3	– 13.4	– 14.8
Deodorants & Talcum Powders	– 2.6	– 9.0	– 11.3
Feminine Hygiene Deodorants	– 6.9	– 7.0	– 6.9
Foot Deodorants & Athlete's Foot Remedies	+ 0.5	+ 2.5	+ 2.0
Feminine Douches	– 2.1	– 8.8	– 0.1
FIRST AID	**+ 6.1%**	**+ 3.2%**	**+ 0.4%**
Antiseptics	+ 13.8	+ 12.3	+ 6.3
First Aid Products	+ 3.5	+ 0.3	– 1.3
HAIR CARE NEEDS	**– 1.1%**	**– 2.0%**	**– 0.1%**
Shampoos	– 6.1	– 5.6	– 3.7
Hair Sprays	+ 16.3	+ 13.1	+ 16.1
Hair Conditioning Rinses	– 3.0	– 4.6	– 4.4
Hair Setting Needs	+ 1.1	+ 1.7	+ 5.2
Home Permanent Kits	– 6.7	+ 0.3	+ 3.3
Hair Coloring	– 2.0	– 8.1	– 10.2
Hair Dressing Needs	– 3.9	– 9.3	– 7.5
ORAL HYGIENE	**– 7.8%**	**– 8.3%**	**– 4.5%**
Toothpastes & Powders	– 9.8	– 13.0	– 7.8
Mouthwashes	– 2.8	+ 2.0	+ 1.1
Breath Fresheners	+ 0.1	– 2.5	+ 1.2
Denture Cleaners	– 2.1	– 9.5	– 4.5
Denture Adhesives	– 6.5	– 9.0	– 6.6
Toothbrushes	– 5.5	+ 3.0	+ 4.5
PROPRIETARY REMEDIES	**+ 2.0%**	**+ 0.5%**	**+ 4.2%**
Antacids	+ 2.1	+ 0.9	– 0.2
Internal Analgesics	+ 2.2	+ 0.1	+ 3.1
External Analgesics	+ 3.9	– 6.2	– 3.6
Cold Tablets	+ 6.3	+ 10.5	+ 29.4
Nasal Sprays—Drops—Inhalers	– 3.1	– 0.7	+ 1.4
Chest Rubs	– 7.5	– 7.3	– 4.0
Cough Remedies	– 4.2	– 5.4	+ 1.8
Laxatives	– 0.7	– 1.0	– 2.3
Sleeping Aids	+ 5.5	+ 0.5	+ 7.6
Tranquilizers	– 11.7	– 21.0	– 14.8
Synthetic Vitamins	+ 11.2	+ 5.1	+ 11.8
Eye Care Products	+ 3.8	+ 7.6	+ 2.6
Appetite Suppressants	+ 2.8	+ 4.1	+ 6.8
SHAVING NEEDS	**– 5.2%**	**+ 2.1%**	**+ 1.4%**
Shaving Creams	+ 1.4	+ 5.4	+ 1.1
Pre-Shave Lotions	– 11.0	– 9.7	– 10.0
After-Shave Lotions	– 7.1	– 1.9	– 13.4
Razor Blades	– 7.2	+ 1.4	+ 3.3
Razors & Blades	– 15.5	+ 8.3	+ 18.1
SKIN CARE AIDS	**– 1.3%**	**– 2.2%**	**+ 0.8%**
Hand & Body Creams & Lotions	– 0.4	– 4.6	+ 5.0
Facial Preparations	– 6.9	– 10.7	– 11.6
Lip Care Products	+ 9.3	+ 27.2	+ 17.4
Suntan Lotions & Oils	– 3.5	+ 5.6	+ 25.1
Cosmetic & Medicated Skin Aids	– 1.8	– 4.0	– 2.1
TOTAL ALL CATEGORIES	**– 1.8%**	**– 2.0%**	**± 0%**

Continued from page 14B

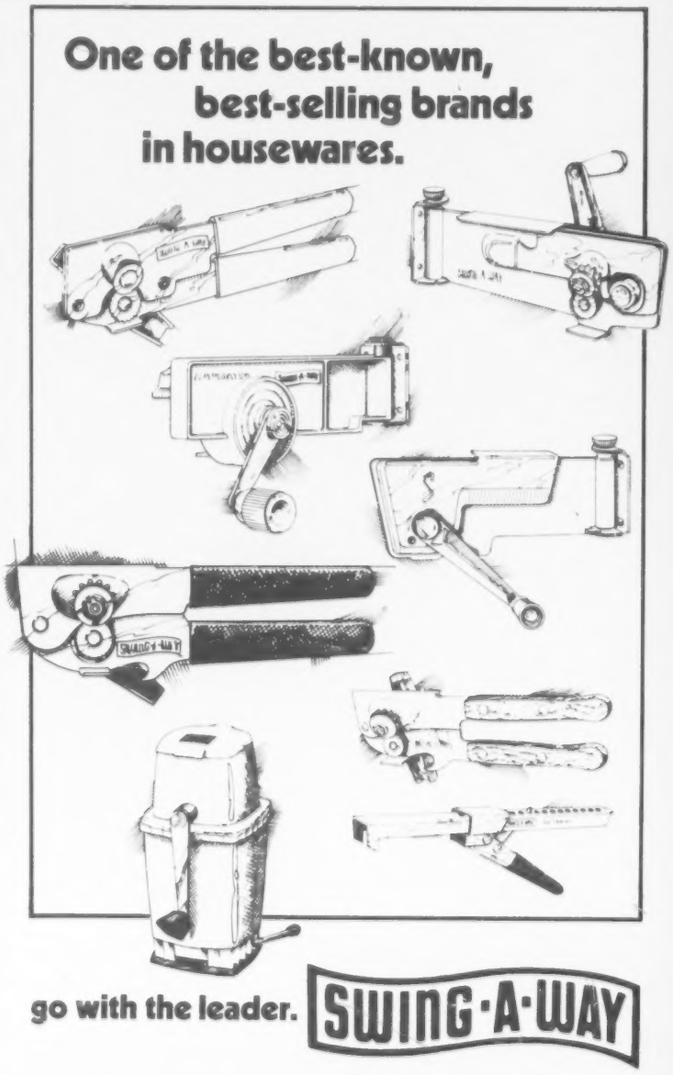
their four-week gain rate amounted to 72.3 percent. New calcium supplements are included in this category.

The 7.6 percent gain rate reported for sleeping aids is the highest in many months, whereas the gain rate for eye care products (2.6 percent) appears to be waning. The loss rate for laxatives and stool softeners (– 2.3 percent) has been increasing of late.

For the second consecutive period, four-week unit sales of shaving needs have shown a modicum of growth as a result of better sales performance for razor blades and sets. While shaving cream sales are fairly static, the September gain of 1.1 percent is on top of a year-ago gain rate of 6.6 percent. Both pre-shave and after-shave lotions continue to be weak.

Healthy skin care

Finally, in the skin care aids product group, the healthy gains for lip care products (+ 17.4 percent), suntan lotions and oils (+ 25.1 percent) and hand and body creams and lotions (+ 5.0 percent) were of sufficient magnitude to erase the losses of 11.6 percent for facial preparations and 2.1 percent for cosmetic and medicated skin aids. The gain of 0.8 percent for this product group is on top of a strong sales period in 1985, when unit sales in September registered an increase of 7.3 percent over 1984. ■



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